

English language training programs will now face a freeze in funding even though 300,000 students with limited English will enroll in school next year.

The Bush budget cuts English language training funding by almost 10 percent per child, but still requires testing of these students to determine how to bring students up to new standards.

We should be helping school districts like those in my Congressional district, which are struggling to make good on their promise to hire more bilingual teachers to help the growing number of Spanish-speaking children.

Instead, the Bush budget cuts funding for bilingual education and teacher training.

The Bush administration's budget cuts special education programs by so much that the goals set by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) cannot be met for at least 12 more years.

Special Education is underfunded by \$500 million. The "No Child Left Behind" Act requires that IDEA be met in 7 years, not 12.

The funds for the Teacher Quality State Grant program, which is the primary Federal program for training teachers in core academic subjects, have come to a halt.

92,000 fewer teachers will be trained than the Program currently supports. The Bush Administration's budget is \$404 million below the amount promised in the "No Child Left Behind" for teacher training.

The Republican budget also freezes child care funding and includes only a slight increase for Head Start. This will reduce the number of children already eligible and leave millions empty-handed.

The Administration fails to fund its vital education program that claims to leave no child behind. It seems that Republicans think that simply by naming the education bill "No Child Left Behind," they are keeping their promise to the American people. Americans know better! Americans deserve better!

I urge both the Administration and the Members of Congress to fully fund the "No Child Left Behind" Act for the sake of our children.

#### CHALLENGES FACING OUR FIRE DEPARTMENTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. SMITH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, as a supporter of the bill of the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ETHERIDGE) and the effort of this Congress to be more aggressive in support of our firefighters, I very much encourage the consideration and ultimate passage of legislation that will accomplish that.

This morning we held a hearing in the Committee on Science to examine just how the Federal Government can help ensure that our Nation's fire departments are adequately equipped and staffed to perform the jobs they have been asked to do. The hearing shed light on the challenges facing our fire departments. I would like to talk about a couple of those challenges.

First, the need of the firefighting community to work together on these efforts. Our challenge and our goal is

to increase support for firefighters in this country. After 9/11 of last year, I think all of America recognized that we depend a great deal on our first responders. The firefighters in New York set an example for people all over the world that it takes cooperation if we are going to protect the liberty and freedom that we have.

One concern I have is the contest that has been developing between volunteers and full-time firefighters. I think we need to do everything we can so all of our first responders, firefighters and medics work together to accomplish the goals that we need to accomplish at the Federal level.

In my home State of Michigan, the Professional Firefighters Union has been pressuring their members not to volunteer in their home communities because they might displace potential union members. The events of September 11 generated a renewed appreciation and respect for firefighters.

Two years ago, Members of the House started a program of helping fire departments around the country with equipment and with training. I think we should remind ourselves that many of these first responders are in small communities that cannot depend on a fire department that is 100 miles away. The only way a lot of these communities can survive is to have volunteers that can work in those departments. Where else do we have volunteers that are willing to go out and risk their lives to protect our property and our lives?

The grant program that we established provided direct support to fire departments around the country for basic firefighting needs. In its initial year, the program proved to be very popular with both fire services and Members of Congress. Additionally, the U.S. Fire Administration received extensive praise for an exceptional job of developing and implementing the program efficiently under challenging time constraints.

In my mind, the need-based peer-reviewed grant program is an excellent example of how the Federal Government can assist the first responders, both paid full-time people and volunteers, with the basic training and equipment they need to answer our calls.

If we lose volunteers in those very small communities, it will be a tremendous financial burden to maintain the kind of protection that we have now. This has got to be a situation where we work together.

Those of us in the Fire Caucus, while supportive of a grant program to increase terrorism preparedness, quickly recognized that the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program was intended to provide fundamental firefighting support to departments, and should be kept separate and distinct from the FEMA counterterrorism funds that the President proposed.

Further complicating this problem has been language in the proposed

Homeland Security legislation that gives the FEMA Administrator and the Secretary of the new department authority to shift funds among programs. There is a real concern now that this authority, while understandable for administrative flexibility, could eliminate the basic program that several of us thought was very important that we implement in this country.

In conclusion, let me say that firefighters around this country are there when there is a community project. In many places they hold baked good sales to make sure that they can buy the equipment to protect us in those local communities. We need local support for these firefighters, we need more State support for these firefighters, and we need more Federal support for these firefighters.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the United States Fire Administration that my science research subcommittee oversees for their hard work and commitment in bringing the goals of this program to fruition. Administrator David Paulison and grants director Bryan Cowan have gone above and beyond the call of duty.

#### DEMOCRATS ARE WORKING TO GET OUR ECONOMY BACK ON TRACK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on a separate point from what I wish to discuss this evening, let me acknowledge that I had an opportunity to meet with one of my firefighters from Houston, Texas, and I do want to emphasize the important role that firefighters play in homeland security and as first responders.

I hope that we will be able to address their concerns, particularly as it relates to one legislative initiative that I am supporting dealing with H.R. 3992 which addresses the question of providing the added resources and personnel to ensure that both fire trucks and fire stations are well equipped with the necessary personnel. I believe however we resolve these matters dealing with volunteer firefighters as well as our full-time firefighters, we do realize that they are, in fact, very viable and vital first responders, and we should address their concerns.

It is my sense and position to move and hope that we will move H.R. 3992 as expeditiously as we can. We had a hearing in the Committee on Science, and I hope that we will be able to do that on behalf of the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a lot that we can do on behalf of the American people, and as I have watched the base of the economy crumble beneath us, if we really went back home and asked who is hurting or what needed to be improved or corrected, most would say that they would ask that we get the economy back on track.